

Gun Control: Organized & Unorganized Interests

September 23, 2021

Rational Self Interest

- Definitions
- Limitations
- Application in policy-making arena

The Prisoner's Dilemma

	B stays silent (cooperates)	B betrays A (defects)
A stays silent (cooperates)	Both serve 1 year	A serves 3 years, B goes free
A betrays B (defects)	A goes free, B serves 3 years	Both serve 2 years

Olson (1982)

- groups vs rational, self-interested group behavior
- **How do we explain group behavior?**
- disputes customary view that groups of individuals with shared interests will further their shared interests. Individuals act according to common interests when aligned with personal gain (social, economic, political). You have to be personally motivated to act.
- Arthur Bentley: “there is no group without its interest”
- Can we develop a “logical or theoretical explanation of certain aspects of group and organizational behavior”?

Bateson (2012)

- **What causes people to become politically engaged?**
- Crime victimization as a important but academically overlooked cause of political participation and political action
- “Role of pain and loss in politics”
- Notes expressive and emotional benefits of political participation for victims
- “All types of crime victimization are associated with higher levels of political participation” (577)
- Conducted Latin American, North American, European, African and Asian regressions

Goss (2006)

- *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*
- gun control vs gun rights
- Where is the movement? Why is the gun control lobby so weak?
- How do we define a social movement? Would you know one if you saw it?
- Series of “shootings planted the seeds of a substantial, visible, grassroots, nation-spanning gun control effort” (2)
- “Gun control participation paradox” most people want strict gun laws but they don’t mobilize to get them. What are the existing laws about?
- Constitution rewards “those who build consent from the ground up”
- 1996 Dunblane School shooting in Scotland sparks to gun control movement in Great Britain (North 2013)

Goss (2006) cont'd

- *social movements are (1) organized, (2) sustained, (3) visible, and (4) locally rooted forms of political action aimed at (5) changing norms and laws. (pace Gameson & Meyer)*
- **social movement:** “elite-directed masses pushing social as well as policy change in multiple private and government arenas” vs
- **interest-group model:** “a small cadre of elites working through staff-driven non-profit organizations to push legislative change in congress”
- Collective action vs rational self-interest

Goss

“Although movements are not required for legislation to pass, movements matter in important ways. Movements increase the probability that elected officials will act and that the proposed reforms will be substantive instead of merely symbolic. Movements are particularly important for policy proposals that, like gun control, are (1) broadly popular but face well-organized opposition, and (2) can be portrayed as challenging political-cultural values. Always looking to the next election, American politicians are reluctant to take policy risks.” (p.9)

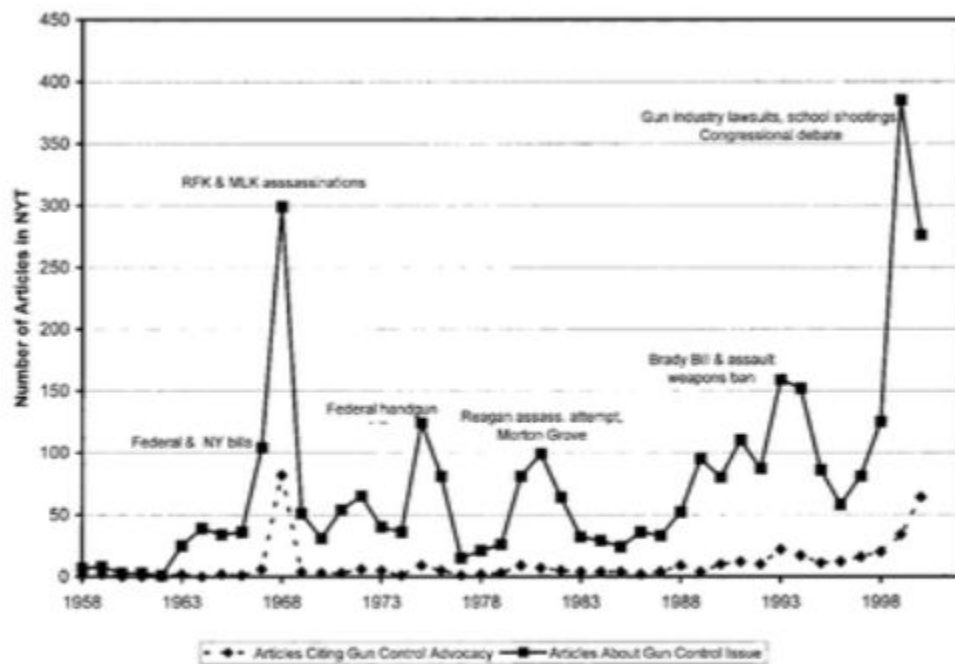


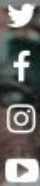
Figure 1.2. An Issue without a Movement. Source: *New York Times Index*, 1958–2000.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting

- On Feb 14, 2018 seventeen students were murdered and seventeen students were injured when Nikolas Cruz a 19-year-old expelled student opened fire on with a semiautomatic rifle in a shooting that lasted 6 minutes.
- Parkland, FL shooting now stands as one of the deadliest shooting in U.S. history, surpassing the Columbine shooting that claimed 15 lives
- Parkland student survivors including David Hogg have mobilized to found their own advocacy group and social movement. Direct actions fueled by their anger with U.S. politicians' failure to pass gun reform policy.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2019-08-19/poll-majority-fav-or-gun-control>

A PEACE PLAN FOR A SAFER AMERICA.



A Peace Plan for a Safer America:

Change the standards of gun ownership

Halve the rate of gun deaths in 10 years

Accountability for the gun lobby and industry

Name a Director of Gun Violence Prevention

Generate community-based solutions

Empower the next generation

**MARCH
FOR OUR
LIVES** 

March for Our Lives -- Mission

To harness the power of young people across the country to fight for sensible gun violence prevention policies that save lives.

- *Call to action of youth, survivors, victims*
- *Issue reframe beyond gun control*
- *Self-interest reframe*



David Hogg